Ever Waits
For Me
By Rhino.

Leaving Today

[TW: vague sc*de mention (ui i)]**

Despite not seeming to be important to them, judging the last time they spent together in BFB, Clock missed The Losers. He wanted to fix things- fix their perceptions of him- and he'd do anything to do that now.

Especially lately. He'd started feeling like an imposter on his own team, The S. He just never felt as comfortable here as he did on The Losers.

One day was particularly uncomfortable. Winner said they wanted to spend more time with the other contestants, and that they didn't want to hang out with Clock all the time. This was understandable, but Clock wasn't sure if he really trusted or felt close with anybody else on the team the way he did with Winner. He convinced himself that he and Winner were close friends, but deep down he knew he'd never really taken the time to tell Winner about the real him, and mostly just tried to please and learn about Winner any way he can. Thinking back, perhaps that wasn't really the normal way to make friends with a teammate.

He wandered off, feeling rejected. He'd been trying so hard to be somebody that he must've not realized how annoying it must've been. Was he really annoying? Or was the object he was pretending to be annoying? Who even was he?

The more he wandered, the less he wanted to go back. He felt humiliated. He felt ashamed. He reminisced all that he thought he had during BFB, before he died. Before he was forgotten. Before he stopped mattering. At some point he found a building. It looked like a cabin, but not one of those cute cabins with nice plants that you'd want to spend your time at during a vacation. It was a creepy, haunted-looking cabin. Spiderwebs all over the patio and water

damage on the wooden steps, everything with a layer of grime over it.

However, Clock knew ghosts weren't real, and the chance there was some murderer in an
abandoned cabin was highly unlikely. So why not explore?

He hated how unkept everything was. This cabin would've probably been really nice if
it was properly looked after. He couldn't help wondering who it belonged to. Could the owner be dead? It would suck if he found a dead body in there.

When he managed to open the door and step inside, it really looked like any
old cabin, with a chair and a fireplace, just with cobwebs and a layer of dust over
everything. Every step he took seemed to make a creaking noise. None of the lights worked, but the sun shone through a window from the front, as well as some from the sides. A picture frame sat on a table, which Clock saw.. another clock.

Although aware other clocks existed, he'd never really met one. He eventually found some stairs, wondering if he even dared to go up. It didn't take him too long to decide, yes, he would go up. Worst case scenario he finds a dead body. Which is pretty bad, but maybe he could save an object that's been dead for years.

He did not find a dead body, but there was a really weird mechanism, sitting on a
pillow, which was next to another, empty pillow, both sitting on the floor. He blew the
dust off of it, which he immediately regretted once he spent the next fraction of a
minute coughing. It seemed to be some sort of clip-like thing? It didn't really look like
anything. However, when Clock saw a socket wrench for the first time he couldn't imagine it being able to do anything, but alas, Tennis Ball and Golf Ball used it to build something.

He decided to take the mechanism outside- or at least try to. He

didn't want to break it, but taking something downstairs without arms isn't the easiest thing to do, and so both he, and the thing, ended up tumbling down the stairs.

"Ugh," he groaned, after bumping into the wall at the bottom of the stairs. He looked over at the mechanism, which seemed to be completely in tact, despite a small dent from falling down the stairs. Once he took it outside, he can see it much better- yet still had almost no clue what it was! There were buttons, but when he pressed them they didn't do anything. He noticed a panel, which meant it needed batteries. He went back into the house, rummaging through drawers. Putting the batteries on the counter, he noticed something he hadn't before- a piece of paper. He grabbed it, staring down to read it.

If anybody finds this, it means I succeeded. I am gone. Not completely, just. Away. Away from this world. You can find my work upstairs. My journal is in a drawer up there too. However, I need to test it. I do not know that it is safe. If you find the other, which I left for whoever finds it, I advise you do not use it for your own safety.

Clock frowned. Was this? No it can't be.... *Right*? A few minutes were spent just sitting
on the floor, before he took a deep breath and placed the paper down on the ground,
then heading upstairs, curious about the journal, which he very carefully brought down the stairs, and outside.

A lot of it was just talking about day-to-day activities. Him and "Cup" went to find a waterfall, only to find a faucet right next to a puddle of water. They apparently still had a fun time. Clock felt happy for them, despite not really knowing either personally.

At some point in the journal, the object seemed sorrowful, writing about how much he missed his things used to be, wishing he can relive his favorite moments. Clock felt empathetic reading that, for he, too, felt that way.

Further in the journal, there became less talk of friends and more talk of this invention, which Clock slowly realized was a time machine, made specifically for a clock.

Clock was invested. A real time machine? In the journal the object explained how to use it and that he hoped to test it soon. This went on for a few entries, until they stopped.

At first, Clock couldn't really imagine what he'd do with it, or if it was even worth trying, but after some thinking, he wondered if he could literally get his own life back.

In most stories, time travel causes problems. Stuff changed in the past will change the future, and potentially mess everything up. These things end up very difficult to fix.

However, Clock didn't plan on coming back to the present. Or "go back to the future" once he'd gone into the past. Frankly, he wasn't happy with the current timeline. He missed his friends from The Losers, who he competed with in BFB. He felt closer to them than the members of The S, besides Winner, but Clock knew they didn't feel the same.

If he went back to the time he died- which nobody would think anything of it, since they didn't even realize he died- he could get back the time with his teammates that he lost to death, and finally feel the connection to his teammates he once loved.

And maybe, just maybe, they'd love spending their time with him too.

Now is never gone

After finding batteries and a screwdriver, Clock made his way outside to put them into what was apparently, a time machine. He sat and stared at it with disbelief. It seemed a bit small to be functional, and the object who made it- which was the clock in the picture he saw earlier- seemed pretty apprehensive about others trying it on their own.

After zoning out for a bit, Clock jolted up upon feeling something crawl on his leg, noticing a small spider, and shaking it off. "Ugh! Get off!"

He hated spiders, regardless of whether they were truly evil or not. Sometimes he felt similarly about Eggy. Did she "forget" him on purpose, or was it fully accidental? He couldn't really know. He could've asked Eggy about it, but in the past she'd been quite accusatory of him, which made him unwilling to talk to her. Plus, at this point it'd just feel awkward. Eggy didn't mean to hurt him, right? She didn't seem so bad outside of the few times it affected him, but he hated to think it was a problem he had. Maybe it was, maybe it wasn't. Either way, that's one thing he hoped to fix when he tried again.

Eventually, he finished putting the batteries in. The instructions said the device is meant to be connected to the "hands," specifically those on the dial of a clock. Clock wondered what the point of a time machine only one type of object can use was. How is that supposed to get any money or fame out of it? It was quite lucky
that Clock was the one who found it. Who else would've found any worth in such a thing?

He placed the mechanism on, it feeling snug on his case, and connecting to his hands in the center. Not the most comfortable definition of snug, but he was determined to use it. Part of him

wondered what he'd do if things went wrong. What if he died? What if he went too far back? What if it trapped him somewhere? He shook away the thoughts, and went back to the instructions. Apparently all he had to do was think of a time he wanted to go to, and that would be enough to take him there. So he thought and thought and thought about when he died, and how he wanted to be put after that. He took a deep breath, and pressed the button.

He felt the most painful sensation on his face, as his hands moved at an extremely quick speed, in a direction they were never meant to go- but then it stopped, and started going the correct way again. He opened his eyes and- he was in the same area, except the materials that were scattered around him were gone, and the door to the cabin was closed. Had it worked?

A dizziness had washed over him, but he stood up. He had to get back to the competition area. It was the only way for him to truly know. He managed to find a bag, and took the time machine off, placing it into the bag. It'd be weird if he just appeared with some random machine on his face... After that, he began his trip back to the competition area.

When he was nearing the competition area, Clock saw a tall tower- no, staircase- in the distance, all the teams at the bottom. He made his way to the Losers.

"Hey guys, sorry I'm late! What's the challenge?"

The others seemed to just look at him for a moment. Clock was usually quite organized and punctual, which made sense considering he was a clock. However, there wasn't reason to worry about this.

"Oh, uh," Pin started, only to be interrupted by Leafy.

"The challenge was to get up the stairs the fastest! Needle already won the challenge for us."

Clock's smile faltered a bit, already feeling a bit left out, but he knew he shouldn't lose hope so fast.

He turned and stared at Leafy. "Wait, since when were you here?"

"Oh, you must've not been here.. Leafy rejoined and is in our team now," Coiny said, "you should really pay more attention."

Clock scoffed. "Well there wasn't really any way I could've known."

Eggy joined in. "If you would've been here you'd have known."

Clock sighed. He needed to quit arguing. If he got eliminated all his time-traveling work would go to nothing. "You guys are right. My bad," he said, and the others seemed at peace.

Clock was already feeling a bit let down by the situation, but he still felt he could make life so much better here. He just had to figure out how.

After the challenge was over, and iance was up for elimination, Four stared at The Losers, an eyebrow raised.

Something was off.

Clock was there, talking to his teammates. The thing was, Clock was supposed to be dead.

"Hey Four!" X greeted, skipping up to the blue number.

"X, you can't bring back dead objects, right?"

"Only you can do that Four," X said.

Four nodded. "Are any recovery centers around?"

X shrugged. "I haven't seen any! Why?"

Four stared at the clock again. "Hmm... Clock is back."

"Did you revive him?"

Four shook their head. "No. He only died a little bit ago."

X stared at Clock. "Well, maybe you did and forgot!"

"I'd remember."

"Maybe a recovery center is around here somewhere?" X suggested.

Four sighed. "I don't have time for this. He probably found his own way back."

At the following elimination, Match was eliminated, and it was time for the game to
continue.

Four had been planning this challenge, and introduced it through switching their mind with X's. Clock didn't really understand how that worked, but eventually found himself in a room with the other Losers. There was an imposter among them... But who?

Eggy and Leafy were playing tic-tac-toe. Everybody else was... not really doing much of anything.

"So, Cake, any ideas who the fake is?" Clock asked.

"Not really. it's not me though."

"Me neither."

"Well," Needle said, joining the conversation, "We can't just say we aren't the fake, we could be lying!"

Clock stared at Needle for a second.

"Don't take this the wrong way, but why do you look... different?"

Coiny joined in as well. "Oh yeah! It looks.... Strange."

"I think it's because of the photo cake Leafy gave me..."

Leafy frowned, "I didn't know that'd happen."

Eggy interrupted, "Shouldn't we be doing the challenge?"

Needle nodded, "Right, right, anybody have any clue?"

"Clock has been very suspicious," Pin said, in a voice that sounded oddly strained.

"What?! How am I suspicious?" Clock exclaimed, feeling slightly offended.

"You just seem... Different," Pin said, a bead of ooze dripping down her face.

Eggy nodded. "I agree! You're usually more up-and-ready for challenges, but you haven't been doing much this time!"

Clock rolled his eyes, "I wasn't here last time either! So maybe I'm just laying back a bit..."

"He has a point," Needle said, "he wasn't here last time, so he's probably being honest."

"Maybe Cake?" Clock suggested, and Cake gasped.

"Why would I be the fake?!"

Clock hummed. "I don't know, it is a possibility though."

Cake scowled. "Okay, but what about Pin? She's been nothing but accusatory this
entire time!"

"Not true," Pin said, crossing her arms.

Coiny stared at Pin for a second. "Pin, how many tokens did you have in your
collection again?"

Pin was quiet, seeming to think about it. "Uuuuh, eight?"

"Pin's the fake!" Coiny said, pointing, and Lightning turned back to his original form.

"Woah, nice work Coiny!" Clock said.

"Heh, nobody knows Pin like I do, I can see right through Lightning!"

Clock just nodded. He wondered if anybody would ever know him as well as Coiny knew Pin. He felt a little envious that they had such a

close bond, but that would come for him eventually, right?

Once the challenge ended, Clock actually had time to talk to the others. Eggy, surprisingly, came up to speak with him. He felt nervous. Was she upset about something he did?

"Hey Clock," she greeted, "can I talk to you about something?"

Clock sat on the ground. "Sure thing."

Eggy sat down and sighed. "I just.. this has been on my mind and.. I'm sorry for blaming you for the whole twinkle thing. I was just really upset we lost, you know?"

Clock felt... surprised. If somebody told him he'd get an apology from Eggy today, he wouldn't have believed them.

"So are... Are we good now?"

"I mean, I was never really mad at you," Eggy said, "just upset about losing, but that's what happens here, you know? We win, we lose, it's all part of the game. I just feel like I could've been less harsh about it."

Clock smiled. "That's.. reassuring, thank you. I'm glad you're not mad, and I don't blame you for feeling upset, I mean.. I took the risk, and we got up for elimination. It's understandable you'd be upset.."

Eggy returned the smile. "I'm also sorry for being rude earlier. I know you try your best for a lot of challenges, I guess it just slipped my mind that you might want a break from that."

"It's alright, you're focused on the game Eggy," Clock said, "and I was too, but now... I kind of want to be closer with you guys, my teammates... because after the game, win or lose, I'd rather lose with friends than win with nobody, right?"

Eggy nodded. "That makes sense. I hope to get closer with you and the others as well! It was nice to talk to you, I'm glad we were able to talk about this."

"Me too," Clock said, smiling. It felt as if a huge weight had been

lifted off of him. He wasn't expecting Eggy to befriend him. Even if it took time-traveling to do so, he was happy about it.

Maybe he can get closer with the others as well.

you wanted to

The other losers seemed to be off doing their own thing, but Clock was alone. Right now it felt odd, because the whole reason he came back here was to strengthen his bonds with his teammates.

Part of him felt exhausted. There was an aching in his center, where his hands met, and he felt a bit dazed. One day he hoped he'd have time for this loneliness, and that being alone wouldn't risk his chances of an unnoticeable demise.

He just wasn't sure how to spark up a conversation. Why not try that?

After noticing Firey sitting not too far from him, he took a deep breath, making his way over.

"Hey Firey," he greeted, walking over and standing next to the flame.

"Hi Clock," Firey responded dryly.

"What's up?"

"Just thinking, I don't know how Leafy ended up on our team," he grumbled.

"Didn't the viewers vote her back in?"

"Yeah! And I don't get why!"

Clock was unsure why Firey was so upset about Leafy getting back in. Sure, she was oddly cheery and always seemed to gloat about how righteous she was, but other than that Clock didn't see much an issue.

"Do you think I'd get voted back in if I got eliminated?" Clock asked, only realizing after that it might not be the best way to take the conversation.

Firey smiled sympathetically. "Honestly no. Nothing against you, you just don't really do much? Outside of the challenges you help with, I mean."

Clock sighed. "I guess I should start doing more then, yeah?"

"Do what you want," Firey said, "whatever happens, happens. That's just the game I guess. It's not always fair you know."

Clock couldn't help but agree. It wasn't fair he was forgotten, was it?

Four and X did a small dance, attracting the objects' attention, and everybody began gathering around.

"Today's challenge is- find the buried treasure! There are eight chests hidden around the area with your team's flag," Four said, pointing towards 8 flags, each with a team's name on it, all in a separate sandbox. "The keys for each chest are each hidden in the forest, each with a tag specifying the team it is meant for! Go!"

Pin had a bead of ooze on her after hearing about the challenge. "This challenge sounds complicated.. I guess we should get going guys!"

Some of the losers made their way into the forest, looking behind bushes, in trees, and under rocks.

"I found one!" Leafy exclaimed, holding up a key.

"Nice!" Coiny said, grabbing it, before noticing the tag. "But this is for the better namers... Huh."

"If we hide it, it'll take them longer to find," Needle suggested.

"Good thinking!" Coiny said. Looking around for a good place, then noticed a hole. "Oh, let's bury it! They'll never find it if we bury it!"

Needle and Coiny laughed mischievously as they buried the key, while Clock was staring into every bush he can.

"Find anything?" Pin asked him, and Clock shook his head.

"No, I'm not sure where it'd be hidden. I'm going to try going deeper

into the forest."

"Okay, want me to come?" Pin asked.

Clock nodded, smiling, "Sure thing! Let's go!"

Pin glanced at Coiny and Needle, who seemed busy, then at Cake and Eggy. Firey must've been looking elsewhere

"Any of you want to come?" Pin asked.

"No thanks, this forest gives me the creeps," Cake said, "I'll keep searching over here."

"I'm going to help Leafy dig for the chest," Eggy said.

"Alright, we'll be back!" Clock said, beginning his walk into the forest, and Pin walked beside him.

"I wonder how far Four would hide it, probably not too far right?" Pin asked.

"I'm not sure. I bet we'll find it eventually though!"

As the two went deeper into the forest, Clock began to recognize things. A flowered bush, a log with moss growing from it... he'd been here before, but he couldn't quite remember when. He felt oddly... nervous.

"I'm going to investigate this log," Pin said.

"Alright!" Clock responded, "I'm gonna go a little further, I'll be right back!!"

Clock continued further. He noticed footprints- this was a good sign!

He followed them until- oh. *So that's why this place is familiar.*

———

Clock felt as if the gears within him stopped turning, as he stared at what was in front of him.

Dying was normal. Dying happened. But something about seeing your own dead body in front of you was terrifying. Usually objects would die, but never see their bodies afterwards. They usually didn't even know when they were about to die. There would just be a sudden, disorienting jump in time.

Clock stepped closer, feeling a tension in his head as he stared at a loose gear on the ground. He almost wanted to cry. Why did he come out here? Why did-

He noticed a tree behind it, one of the branches sticking out, a keychain dangling from the end of it.

Four did this on purpose. Did Four know Clock had time traveled? Or was Four merely trying to mess with him? Either way, it didn't feel good.

Clock walked over, averting his eyes from... the body... and managed to get the keys off of the branch. He then remembered Pin. If Pin saw his body here, she'd know he died. He couldn't risk that. If the objects here found out he'd replaced an alternate version of himself, they might not like him very much. He couldn't risk it. It'd take too long to try physically hiding it though, so he'd just have to pretend it wasn't there.

"Hey Pin! I found it!" Clock exclaimed, smiling as he returned to Pin with the key on top of him.

"Oh cool! Where was it?" Pin asked, picking up the key.

"In a tree," Clock said vaguely.

"Okay, let's head back to the chest!"

The two began their way back, but Clock couldn't stop worrying about the situation. *Did Four know?*

"We found the key!" Pin exclaimed as they walked up to where Coiny and Needle had been searching.

"Oh nice! Where was it?" Coiny asked.

"Clock found it in a tree!" Pin said.

Clock nodded in response. "Yup.. It was a team effort though! I would've probably got too nervous to go so far on my own if I'm honest," Clock said humbly.

"Well, let's go help the others with digging out the chest!" Needle said, and the group went to help.

Clock hoped his efforts in this challenge wouldn't go unnoticed. He had hope, but part of him couldn't stop thinking about his original timeline. *Sure* his friends hadn't betrayed him here, but they really let him down in his original timeline.

Perhaps he was being too harsh though. It was his own fault he was forgotten! He should've tried to be more memorable, make closer bonds, and-

"Hey how'd the Better Namers get their key?!" Coiny blurted out.

Needle stared, before noticing Tennis Ball had some sort of tool- a metal detector.

"They seem to have a metal detector," Needle pointed out.

"That's allowed?" Coiny asked, slightly glaring towards the other team for outsmarting their plan.

"Guess so, let's just get out chest," Needle said.

"Hey, where's Firey?" Clock asked, upon realizing Firey still wasn't there.

"He must still be searching," Eggy said.

"We got it!" Cake exclaimed, pushing the chest out of the hole that was dug.

The Losers proceeded to open the chest, and on the inside was an emerald, which Needle swiftly took to Four. They were safe.

"Hey guys! Sorry I took so long, I couldnt find the key!" Firey said,

finally joining the team.

"That's okay, we're safe," Clock said.

Firey smiled at Clock, but something was off about it. *Maybe I'm just overthinking.*

Clock's suspicious was proven right when Firey requested they speak, away from the team. Clock wondered if this would be about their conversation earlier.

"Clock... How often do you go into the forest? I've only been a few times," Firey said, "I got a little lost in there if I'm honest."

"Oh, uh," Clock thought for a moment, "usually just to think."

"This might sound a bit personal, but... I don't know, have you died in there?"

He saw the body. Clock had to figure out how to tell the truth without revealing too much.

"Well, yeah, once," he admitted, "but I was revived shortly after, so it doesn't matter too much!"

He felt a pain within him as he said that. Under normal circumstances, he wouldn't even had been here. The only reason he was here was because of time travel nonsense.

"Oh, alright, I was just wondering because... I saw one of the bodies, I just wasn't too sure why," Firey said, smiling sheepishly.

"Ah, yeah. It happens I suppose," Clock said plainly, concealing his nervousness.

The conversation ended, and the two regrouped with their team, and another team was thankfully up for elimination.

Clock wasn't expecting any more conversations today, but unfortunately, Four came up to him while he was sitting a little bit away from his team. He felt nervous about this. If anybody were to know what was going on, it was Four.

"Clock."

He looked at the blue number, with the most clueless-looking face he could muster. "Yes?"

Four stared sternly at the object. "Why are you alive?"

Clock kept up the facade. "I'm not sure what you mean? I just am?"

"I didn't revive you, did I?"

"I found my own way," Clock said.

"How?"

Clock began feeling even more nervous, trying to come up with a reasonable, believable response.

"Hey Clock!" Pin called from a group with her and Needle, cards between them. "Want to play a card game?"

Clock jumped up, happy to have found a way out of the troublesome conversation. "Sure thing!"

He made his way to the group, leaving Four on their own.